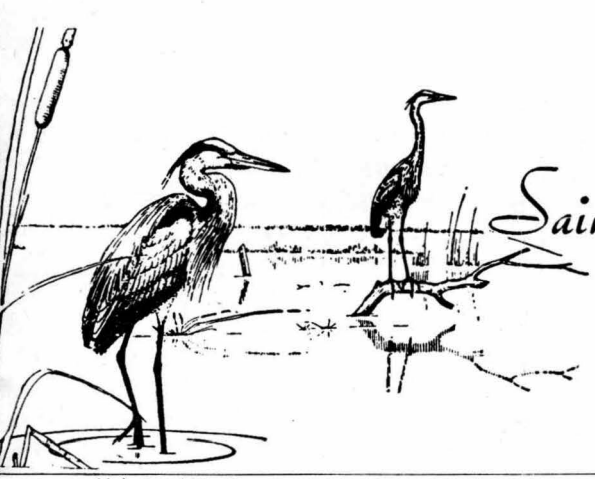

Saint Louis Audubon Bulletin

Vol. 25, No. 3 February, 1957

RANCH AND RANGE

with ALBERT WOOL

On Friday, February 22, The St. Louis Audubon Society will have it's fourth in a series of five lectures when we present Albert J. Wool with his film of the far west, "Ranch and Range."

Sun and soil and the sweet smell of new-mown hay are vivified in this motion picture portrayal of ranch life by a rancher-conservationist who treasures the wild creatures at his doorstep. Wood ducks and water ouzels feed their hungry young; the wildcat stalks warily; rainbow trout spawn and sport in transparent streams; Caspian terns make spectacular dives into the farm pond, while on its surface dragonflies perform intricate ballets.

Al Wool of San Jose, California, imbues the drama of this colorful film with his own experience as rancher and naturalist. In his role as father, Mr. Wool catches the delight of his children in accepting animals, frogs and birds as a vital part of their lives.

Golden eagles and hawks—great birds of prey—soar across the western ranges, each serving a purpose in the balance of nature. There is constant struggle for survival among wild creatures. The rare California condor, whose weird form suggests it is a living relic of prehistoric times, borders on extinction. Newts and frogs attempt to elude predators—sometimes successfully, sometimes not. There are even relationships between wild and ranch animals, such as the sequence where dog tussles with skunk and finds that each plays with different rules!

Here is the sweep of life on ranch and range, exciting in its vividness and beauty.

Albert J. Wool grew up on his father's mountain ranch in California's Coast Range country. His keen interest in wildlife began as a boy when he made pets of frogs, toads, and salamanders. He discovered and climbed to his first eagle's nest at

the age of ten. Encouraged by their parents, he and his brothers and sisters turned an empty upstairs room into a haven for injured birds, some of which became so tame that they followed the youngsters to school!

While a student at Stanford University, Mr. Wool's knowledge and interest in natural history led him to special work on problems involving conservation of deer and the economic importance of California birds of prey. He joined the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society and served two years as its president. He has had articles published in natural history magazines and is an authority on California wildlife.

Al Wool owns and operates a 600-acre ranch near San Jose, California, where he lives with his wife and children. For the past several years, he has been producing motion pictures about wild creatures. His color motion picture, "Ranch and Range," is dedicated to spreading his knowledge of birds and animals, proving to his Screen Tour audiences the value of wildlife, especially in relation to ranching.

This lecture, as are all Audubon Society Screen Tours, will be presented at 8:15 p.m. at the Third Baptist Church, Grand and Washington, and will be open to the public. Plan to attend and invite a friend.

CHRISTMAS CENSUS
AUGUST A. BUSCH WILDLIFE
WELDON SPRINGS

December 30, 1956; 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.: Morning heavy fog until 9:30; Temp. 38-42; Partly cloudy. Little or no wind. Lakes and creeks all open; 24 Observers in eight groups. Area divided into 12 sections. All covered. Forty-eight miles on foot, fifty by car. Total party hours 80. Following birds counted: Pied-billed grebe 1; Canada goose 345; Mallard 805; Blackduck 3; Gadwell

SUET CAKES . . . SUNFLOWER SEED . . . PEANUT BUTTER BALLS

WILD BIRD SEED MIXTURE . . . BIRD HOUSES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

LARGE SELECTION OF WILD BIRD FEEDERS

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20; Baldpate 95; Pintail 210; Green-winged teal 2; Ring-neck duck 14; Canvas-back 12; Goldeneye 1; Sharp-shinned hawk 2; Cooper's hawk 2; Red-tail hawk 38; Red-shouldered hawk 1; Rough-leg hawk 1; Bald eagle 2; Marsh hawk 7; Sparrow hawk 4.

Bobwhite 131; Kildeer 1; Wilson's snipe 2; Mourning dove 156; Great horned owl 1; Barred owl 3; Kingfisher 8; Flicker 73; Pileated 9; Red-bellied woodpecker 207; Redhead woodpecker 9; Hairy woodpecker 8; Downy woodpecker 77; N. horned lark 3; Prairie horned lark 39; Bluejay 119; Crow 169; Bl.-capped Chickadee 102; Tufted titmouse 139; White-breasted nuthatch 30; Brown creeper 1; Carolina wren 67; Mockingbird 35; Robin 34; Bluebird 115; Golden-crowned kinglet 4; Cedar waxwing 114; Migrant shrike 14; Starling 356; English sparrow 357; European tree sparrow 1; Meadowlark 77; Redwing blackbird 2,281; Bronzed grackle 118; Rusty blackbird 485.

Cowbird 15; Cardinal 433; Purple finch 90; Goldfinch 844; Redeye towhee 12; Savanah Sparrow 12; Leconte's sparrow 6; Slate colored junco 2,335; Tree sparrow 3,452; Field sparrow 46; Harris' sparrow 8; White crowned sparrow 84; White Throat sparrow 10; Fox sparrow 20; Lincoln sparrow 1; Swamp sparrow 45; Song sparrow 188. Total 72 species, 14,701 individuals.

Alberta Bollinger, Charlotte Vogt, George Cameron, Dick Grossenheider, Karen Kratoville, David Easterla, May Tremaine, Sally Springer, Julian Neill, Robert J. Hill, Ludlow Hill, Dorthea Vogel, Pat Grace, Earl Comfort, Jack McDonald, Bruce Westerroth, Marge Self, Frank Erb, Mr. Bess, Garry Geissow, Phil Meyer, Stoner Haven, Jack Van Bentheuysen, Jim Comfort, compiler.

NEW BOOK ABOUT FLAMINGOS ISSUED BY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Pickled flamingo tongues were considered quite a delicacy by ancient Roman emperors, whose tastes turned to such exotic fare as camel's heels, peafowls' brains, and parrot eggs. Many thousands of the Mediterranean flamingo were killed for a single Roman banquet.

These and many other colorful facts are contained in Robert P. Allen's new book, "The Flamingos, Their Life History and Survival," to be published by the National Audubon Society July 10. This is the first comprehensive book on the flamingo, one of the largest and most strikingly colored of all birds. It is the fifth in a series of research studies sponsored by the Audubon Society on the subject of birds that have been or are presently threatened with extinction. Since 1905, the year of its incorporation, the Society has been actively interested in the protection of the West Indian flamingo.

The author, who is research director of the National Audubon Society, tells how man has hunted and killed the flamingo from earliest times. And although flamingo meat is no longer the important food item it was in the past, hunting the flamingo for food and the taking of its eggs are still serious threats to its survival in some places. This is because the flamingo spends much of its life cycle in areas of the earth which are sub-marginal for agricultural purposes, areas in which impoverished natives living off the land turn to the flamingo as one of the few available food sources.

Mr. Allen relates that natives of the Bahaman Islands have hunted and harassed the West Indian flamingo which nests there to such an extent that its numbers are drastically diminished. He observes that it is not simply a question of destroying the birds but of driving them from their nesting and feeding grounds, forcing them into new areas. Thanks to the efforts of the Society for the Protection of the Flamingo in the Bahamas in obtaining warden protection for the birds and in carrying on an effective educational program, the numbers of the West Indian flamingo have taken an upswing.

Although now only an occasional wild flamingo is glimpsed in Florida, outside the famous captive flock at Hialeah Park, these scarlet birds used to winter in large numbers along both Florida coasts. Mr. Allen describes the almost complete absence of the wild birds in Florida to the loss of their summer habitat on North Andros Island in the Bahamas.

The author points out that since suitable habitats are not many in number, the problem of the survival of the flamingo, not only in the West Indies but everywhere it occurs, is essentially one of preserving the habitat from human invasion. The most serious future threats will come from the desire to drain or irrigate flamingo nesting and feeding areas for food production, or to explore these areas for oil and other resources. Another common threat arises from the disruption of nesting activities by low-flying aircraft. Also, tourists and photographers have a tendency to disturb accessible flocks by thoughtless action.

Mr. Allen devotes much attention to the West Indian flamingo, Phoenicopterus ruber, into whose range he made over two dozen field trips in preparation of the new book. He has recorded its entire life history, including descriptions of behavior previously unknown. He estimates that as a result of man's depredations, the numbers of individuals in the great flocks of the West Indian flamingo have dwindled from close to 100,000 to near 20,000 at the present time. Unless the efforts to protect these birds are continued and enlarged, Mr. Allen says, it is conceivable that they may in the future pass from the scene entirely.

The numbers of the five other forms of the flamingo occurring

around the globe have been less seriously depleted, although none is without some form of threat. The Mediterranean flamingo, Phoenicopterus antiquorum, whose range extends from the salt lakes and saline deserts of the western Mediterranean to the steppes of the Kirghiz and the lonely wastes of the Great Rann of Kutch in India, may suffer the loss of irreplaceable habitat by drainage or irrigation for agricultural purposes. Other members of the flamingo family thrive in the bitter lakes of the Great Geologic Rift in East Africa, the wild places of Argentina and the bare alkaline lakes of the high Andes where two distinct species of strange three-toed flamingos live.

The 304 page, paper cover book is illustrated with 52 line drawings, 12 black and white half-tones and 4 color photographs. The color frontpiece is by Roger Tory Peterson.

Our service department, through Bob Hecht, has this fine treatise available.

INCREASE OUR MEMBERSHIP

In order to guarantee that the St. Louis Audubon Society will be able to carry on it's fine work in the field of Conservation Education and bring the message of Audubon to the people of St. Louis, it is necessary that a large and strong membership be maintained. It is suggested that you make a special effort to bring in two new members in the next month. For your information the dues are now:

Student	$ 2.00
Regular	5.00
Husband-Wife Regular	8.00
Sustaining	10.00
Husband-Wife Sustaining	18.00
Active	25.00
Supporting	50.00
Contributing	100.00
Life	200.00

Dues should be mailed direct to the Audubon Society, 1130 Fifth Avenue, New York 28, N. Y. For further information about memberships contact our Executive Scretary, Mrs. J. Marshall Magner, 516 Beacon Avenue, Webster Groves 19, Mo. WOodland 1-4588.

162 KINDS OF BIRDS NEAR AUDUBON CAMP

Unusual opportunities for outdoor study are offered at the Audubon Camp in northwestern Wisconsin, which opens for its second year of operation on June 17.

This camp for adults is located at the "crossroads" of animal and plant distribution. The observer may see western meadowlarks and yellow-headed blackbirds of the west, Canada jays and white-throated sparrows of the north, as well as many birds common to the southern and eastern parts of the United States. During the 1955 summer season the men and women attending the camp listed 162 species of birds found on the Audubon property or during field trips. Included among the birds nesting at Hunt Hill, the 300-acre site of the camp, were black terns, pileated woodpeckers, loons, red-headed woodpeckers and ruffed grouse.

There is also much of geological interest at the Audubon Camp near Rice Lake and Spooner, Wisconsin. Its dormitories, dining hall and other buildings are situated on the moraine where the last great ice sheet stopped. From Hunt Hill one can see the expansive out-washed plains to the south, and the sandy glacial moraines to the north. In the pot-holes where the soil is damp and therefore remains cooler, black spruce and tamarack grow in large spagnum moss bogs, as one might see to the north in Canada. These bogs, with pitcher plants, snow-berries, Labrador tea and other plants associated with more northern areas, are within walking distance of the camp. Upon the better drained hills of the camp area, the trees and shrubs, as well as the wildlife, are essentially the same as those in most of the middle west and east.

One of the field trips Audubon campers take is to the Crex Meadows Conservation Area, composed of submerged marshland and uplands of prairie and oak opening types. Here active work is in process by the Wisconsin Conservation Department to restore the original habitat for the benefit of wildlife. Campers

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may stand in big blue-stem grass which, at the end of summer, reaches two or three feet above their heads. In this area they may also see sharp-tailed grouse, occasional deer, and perhaps a black bear.

This summer's sessions at the midwest Audubon Camp start on June 17, July 1, July 15, August 5 and August 19. The camp is operated on a non-profit basis by the National Audubon Society, one of the world's largest conservation organizations. The camp program is under the guidance of a staff of trained naturalists, headed by Walter W. Engelke of Madison.

In discussing the Audubon Camp activities, Mr. Engelke stated, "All of the first-hand experiences serve to put meaning and enjoyment into the daily program. They offer unparalleled opportunities for students to grasp the basic facts about soil, water, plants and wildlife and the relation of their conservation to human progress. This intimate daily contact is made even more rewarding through demonstrations of how persons may use this knowledge to interest and teach other adults as well as youth—one of the chief reasons for operating the camp."

Above the minimum age of 18, people of all ages and walks of life participate in the Audubon Camp program. For information about enrollment in this summer's sessions at the midwest camp, write to National Audubon Society, Camp Department, 1130 Fifth Avenue, New York 28, N. Y.

POSSUM TROT PICNIC

The First Scheduled Picnic of the Year will be held May 11th at the fabulous Possum Trot Farm, home of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch columnist, Leonard Hall. Since meals will be furnished by the Church nearby, as last year, it is important that those planning to attend notify the Executive Secretary in advance. Next issue of the Bulletin will carry further details on this picnic and also on the one scheduled at the Rice Estate near Antonio.

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